MCA Advisory

The Journal of the Medal Collectors of America

Volume 14 · Number 8 **November · December 2011**

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Annual Dues:
$55 Hard Copy - $25 Electronic

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MCA Calendar:

New York International Numismatic Convention
January 5-8, 2012





President's Message

As I write this first President's message, it is early November, midway between the MCA meeting at the summer ANA convention and our meeting at the New York International in January.

These are exciting times for MCA and the hobby of medal collecting in general. The summer meeting in Chicago was highlighted by a fascinating co-presentation by our Vice-President, Skyler Liechty, and a virtual Tony Lopez via Skype. Demonstrating the utility of the computer and modern communications in researching medals, Skyler and Tony discussed various online sources for expediting this research. Those familiar with a number of Advisory articles authored by Tony and Skyler know how successful their research efforts have been, so having a glimpse at their methods was a real eye-opener. I hope that Skyler and Tony will follow up their discussion with an article in the Advisory for those who were unable to attend the convention.

The January meeting also promises to be an exciting event, with a presentation by John Sallay on portraits of Athena appearing on School Medals. Other MCA activities and issues will also be discussed. Your officers and Board are busy looking at ways to expand MCA and increase the participation of its membership. I would like to see more regional meetings at some of the larger coin shows, such as the ANA fall and winter shows, so members unable to attend the summer and winter meetings can still meet and enjoy "talking" medals with other members closer to home. I would also like to see a greater presence for MCA at these shows with the manning of a club table to promote MCA and medal collecting. In addition to the meetings, we are fortunate that our newsletter, the Advisory, continues to grow and improve with the efforts of our esteemed editor, John Adams, and the largely unsung efforts of Tony Lopez and others responsible for the layout and formatting. It has become a leading source for cutting edge research as well as correspondence and timely information on current activities in the field of medal collecting. I would like to remind everyone that the Advisory is your publication, reflective of the interests of all of our members. We welcome your articles, comments, observations.

There are many ways we can share our passion for medals with others. I was recently reminded of how fascinating our hobby is while attending a local coin club meeting in Flushing NY. The highlight of the meeting was a presentation by former MCA President David Alexander discussing The Friends of the Medal and Society of Medalists, based on his new book on the same subject. While the audience was unfamiliar with the area, they were clearly intrigued by the presentation; several were interested in purchasing the book and many expressed an interest in obtaining examples of specific medals. We are all potential ambassadors for the hobby; a local coin club, other club meetings; a child's class is all potential areas for promoting medal collecting.

Whether you collect for the artistry, history, topics depicted or challenge of putting together a collection, remember that medal collecting is fun, so enjoy! I hope to see many of you at the January meeting.

~David Menchell

Join us in New York!

New York International Numismatic Convention

MCA
Semi-Annual Meeting

Saturday, January 7, 2012
12:00 PM

Sutton Room
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From the Editor

This issue, of which we are inordinately proud, is our educational issue. Close readers of the content will be able to come a good ways up the curve on 1) the surfaces of medals and 2) engraving on medals. This kind of information could not fill a book but, as presented herein, it does provide practical help on subjects that are basic to collecting. Learn the easy way by reading The Advisory rather than the hard way.

DUES, DUES, DUES!

It is a royal pain to write small checks every year to all the organizations to which you belong. For the club involved, it is just as big a pain to do the collecting. Yes, we should offer a Lifetime Membership but, for whatever reason, we haven't got around to it. So here goes:

1) For one year, $55 to include hard copies of The Advisory.
2) For one year, $25 to include electronic copies of The Advisory.
3) If you don't remember whether you have paid, contact **bdtayman@verizon.net**
4) If you don't pay, Jan-Feb will be your last issue.
5) Use PayPal! It is faster and easier.

Later in this issue, we offer two copies of the new book on Indian peace medals to any member who submits a book review. If you are willing to serve as a reviewer, let me (John W. Adams) know. If you volunteer, it is understood that you may decline any assignment and/or bargain for a better deal if you don't hunger for books on Indian peace medals.

Renew Your
2012
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MEDAL COLLECTORS of AMERICA

Update On MCA Club Medal

We made the mistake of giving a high relief design to a low relief (but wouldn't admit it) mint. Result: two sets of dies broken/nine pieces made. We have since turned to spin-casting; thirty medals in bronze have been made by this process and delivered at $25 per copy. Thirty medals in silver are being made this month for delivery next; exact pricing will be finalized when we determine the weight per piece and the then price of the metal. Another 40 medals will be made in bronze, upon which the project is done. It has been a tribulation but the medal is lovely and a true bargain at the price.

~ John W Adams





All that Glitters is Not Gold (Or Gilt)

by

John W. Adams

Alchemy is the science that sought to create the "philosopher's stone" which, in turn could be used to change base metals into precious metals. Begun in ancient times, alchemy was still at center stage in the 18th century and the dawn of the Industrial Age. One of the more successful attempts to create gold was the formulation of "pinchbeck metal" by Christopher Pinchbeck. He, in turn, passed the secret of concocting pinchbeck to his sons, Christopher and Edward. Alas, the secret died with them.



Christopher Pinchbeck the Elder holding a Watch
1783 Mezzotint Engraving

In *Medallic Portraits of Admiral Vernon*, the authors hypothesized two compositions used to make pinchbeck metal. The first, comprised of roughly 80% copper (expensive) and 20% refined zinc (very expensive), was used for important ornamentation such as cane handles, sword hilts and watch cases. It looked and felt like gold; being ductile, it could be formed into complex shapes. The second was comprised of roughly 60% copper (expensive) and 40% calamine zinc (cheap) and was a relatively inexpensive formulation overall. It was used in the period 1739-1741 to make planchets for Admiral Vernon medals. Being far less ductile than the expensive pinchbeck, this composition was difficult to strike up on the relatively crude presses that were used. However, the aesthetic result achieved was quite pleasing, with the finished medals having a distinctly golden glow.

Because any simple mixture of elements would have been relatively easy to copy, the authors of *Medallic Portraits* further hypothesized that the secret of pinchbeck was a proprietary treatment of the surface. One can only guess how this treatment was applied – there are many precedents but, if anyone had figured it out, we would still have "pinchbeck" today. What we do know is what an Admiral Vernon medal made out of pinchbeck looks like (which is more than most professional cataloguers know). Because looks affect the value of pieces that you may acquire, we are only too happy to demonstrate.

Gold Medals

What a Vernon medal made out of genuine gold looks like is easy to demonstrate because there is only one known:



Illus #1 –*Medallic Portraits*, PBvi 25-OO

This medal makes for a poor illustration of the point because it is cast and, as a result, the detail is not sharp. However, the giveaway is the red tints scattered throughout – these are from copper impurities in the mix. The giveaway, lacking clues from coloration, the considerable heft of the piece is unmistakable. If you can't feel "heft", get yourself an instrument to measure specific gravity.

Gilt Medals

Over the centuries, artisans have simulated gold by gilding. The best, most enduring technique was fire gilding. Per John Ford, the recipe for executing this process has been lost. More likely, in our opinion, it is the fire gilders who have been lost, given that the process gives off mercury vapor in potentially lethal quantities. Be that as it may, before

the process or the people were lost, lovely gilt specimens were made. Some representative examples:



Illus #2, 3 and 4 – *Medallic Portraits, FCv 1-A; Spanish Collection PBvi 6-G; Medallic Portraits, PBv 1-A*

Note the uniformly shiny surfaces, an achievement for which collectors should be prepared to pay a premium price. Gilding done by less demanding processes produces less satisfactory surfaces, as per the following:





Illus #5, 6 and 7 – *Medallic Portraits,* CAvow 3-C, *Medallic Portraits* PBv 30-BB, *Medallic Portraits* PBvb 4-G

Such craftsmanship is worth a discount, not a premium.



An early eighteenth-Century Advertisement for Christopher Pinchbeck Astronomical And Musical Clocks, Fleet Street, London (Permission by Look and Learn www.lookandlearn.com)

Pinchbeck Medals

The numismatic world is generally unfamiliar with pinchbeck metal and herein lies an opportunity for collectors. The golden glow of pinchbeck is analogous to mint red on an early copper, being desirable for itself. It reflects the condition of the piece as it left the press and, further in the case of pinchbeck, it also reflects that the maker was a part of the Pinchbeck team. Those who did not have access to pinchbeck metal had to resort to raw materials of lesser quality and/or greater cost. Most of the Vernon medals that one finds today in degraded condition were made by those producers who were not members of the inner circle.

It has not been established whether the Pinchbeck's furnished planchets to a coterie of engravers or whether that coterie supplied dies to the Pinchbeck's who, in turn, did the manufacturing.. In turn, did the manufacturing. Given the highly variable quality of medals struck, we believe that the engravers did the striking. Thus, there are two variables to monitor, one of which is sharpness. As the following examples will demonstrate, it is possible for a medal to have original color (the equivalent of mint red) without that medal being particularly desirable.



Illus #8, 9 and 10 – *Spanish Collection, PBv 30-AA; Spanish Collection FCv 16-X; Spanish Collection NLh 1-A*

These medals have seen little wear, are drooling with "mint red" and yet, because of being weakly struck, do not adequately tell the story that is being commemorated. That said, they possess that charm which comes with a lack of sophistication.

The real gold, in our opinion and that of the Pinchbeck's, are those medals that have retained most of their original glowing surface AND which are sharply struck. Such examples are not common but, when they do appear, they take you back to when all of the British Isles were basking in the glory of Admiral Vernon's victory at Porto Bello. Here are a few:







Illus #11m, 12 (previous page), 13, and 14
***Medallic Portraits* NLa 1-A,**
Spanish Collection PBvb 9-N,
Stacks Bowers PBvi 5-E
Stacks Bowers CAvl 2-D

Much like the mint red of copper, pinchbeck gold faded or oxidized into a variety of colors. Most common are tan, olive, chocolate brown and reddish brown. Indeed, just as with copper large cents, it is possible to form a riveting collection of Admiral Vernon medals based not on varieties but on color. Those whose collecting is driven at least in part by aesthetics can be thankful that all that glitters is not gold.

Post Script: You may be wondering what clocks have to do with medals. Christopher Pinchbeck, the creator of pinchbeck metal, was even more renowned as a clockmaker. So too were his sons, Christopher and Edward. All three labored during the Golden Age of Clockmaking, when it was a national goal to develop clocks of astronomical accuracy. There is a relatively recent book on the Pinchbeck family and it will be reviewed in a future issue.



A Christopher Pinchbeck musical Clock (top)
With the movement removed and shown at right
And a Pinchbeck signed pocket watch (below)

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The Naval Copenhagen Badge

by

Sim Comfort

One of the great Nelson rarities has been the Copenhagen Badge, with this example having been offered in auction by Morton & Eden on 1 December 2011.



The description accompanying the lot explains the thoughts surrounding the badge which have accumulated over the years:

1388

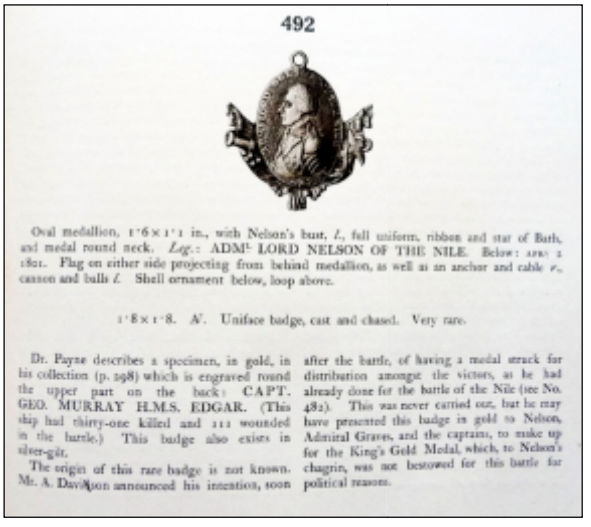
'*Battle of Copenhagen (?), a good, recently-rediscovered example of the enigmatic and extremely rare Nelson Badge bearing the date of the Battle APRL 2 1801, cast in silver and retaining traces of original pale gilding; featuring an oval portrait of Nelson after John de Vaere's cameo for Wedgwood, with title ADML. LORD NELSON OF THE NILE. around, having integrally-cast suspension ring and Trophy of Arms garniture including a fouled anchor, the smoothed reverse with contemporaneous engraving TONNANT 80 G below a pair of crossed ship's spars, 47 x 45mm (cf Milford Haven 492; Hardy 26), very fine, carried on a short silver watch-chain loop for suspension. Estimate: £10,000-15,000 Made: £18,000 with premium.

'Writing in 1919, Admiral The Marquess of Milford Haven listed and illustrated the Payne Collection specimen, now at the National Maritime Museum and described as "probably gold". This piece, named to Captain George Murray of the *Edgar*, led Milford Haven to speculate that these badges may have represented a special award for Copenhagen sponsored by Nelson's prize agent Alexander Davison, made in the face of a widely-deplored failure by the authorities to render official recognition of individual contributions at the Battle.

'While contemporary Press reports indicate that Davison was actively considering a Copenhagen medal in the wake of his resoundingly successful Battle of the Nile awards, recent examination of the extensive Davison papers has yielded no evidence 'that this ever occurred. Furthermore, since Milford Haven's time there has emerged a small, more or less homogenous group of engraved silver-gilt badges citing ships which were not present at Copenhagen and which do not bear any recipients' names. These include three 74s: *Orion*, *Mars* (both at NMM) and *Donegal* (at Portsmouth, ex Lily Lambert McCarthy Collection), now joined by the 80-gun *Tonnant*, a prize from the Battle of the Nile. Several uninscribed bronze-gilt pieces of variable quality also exist.

'Alternative hypotheses regarding these intriguing Nelson-era badges, including the imaginative proposition that they might represent the insignia of some kind of "Band of Brothers" Society, must await further research.'

And from Milford Haven's *British Naval Medals*, pub 1919, we have the following. As a note, the publication of Colonel Payne's collection occurred in 1911. Captain Murray in the *Edgar* led Nelson's squadron into battle on 2nd April.



492

Oval medallion, 1·6×1·1 in., with Nelson's bust, *l.*, full uniform, ribbon and star of Bath, and medal round neck. *Leg.*: ADM^L. LORD NELSON OF THE NILE. Below: APRL 2 1801. Flag on either side projecting from behind medallion, as well as an anchor and cable *r.*, cannon and balls *l.* Shell ornament below, loop above.

1·8×1·8. *Æ.* Uniface badge, cast and chased. Very rare.

Dr. Payne describes a specimen, in gold, in his collection (p. 298) which is engraved round the upper part on the back: CAPT. GEO. MURRAY H.M.S. EDGAR. (This ship had thirty-one killed and 111 wounded in the battle.) This badge also exists in silver-gilt.

The origin of this rare badge is not known. Mr. A. Davison announced his intention, soon after the battle, of having a medal struck for distribution amongst the victors, as he had already done for the battle of the Nile (see No. 482). This was never carried out, but he may have presented this badge in gold to Nelson, Admiral Graves, and the captains, to make up for the King's Gold Medal, which, to Nelson's chagrin, was not bestowed for this battle for political reasons.

From the National Maritime Museum collection we have no less than six examples recorded on their website:

- Gold with a blank reverse.
- Silver with the reverse engraved *Orion* 74.
- Copper gilt with blank reverse.
- Copper gilt with blank reverse.
- Copper gilt with blank reverse.
- Tin with reverse engraved *Mars* 74.

As noted in the Morton & Eden catalogue, another example with an engraved reverse is located at the National Royal Naval Museum (ex Lily McCarthy collection) and bearing the ship's name *Donegal* 74. Including the above example from M & E, all four examples with ships' names engraved on the reverse are in the same hand. Although the George Murray example is noted by Morton & Eden as being in the National Maritime Museum collection, the gold example displayed on the web appears to have a blank reverse. It is also noted that none of these ships took part in the Battle of Copenhagen, 1801. Lastly all of the above examples are cast medals with some of them being chased. Quite a mystery!

This example, which was purchased from a general antique shop some years ago, may offer clues to solving the puzzle. It measures 62mm in height with the surmount and 47mm without the surmount. The maximum width is 48mm. It is a copper gilt struck badge which has been secured to a marble roundel and framed in oak:



More is learned when making a direct comparison with the Morton and Eden example and this copper gilt example:



The struck copper gilt example certainly appears to be the original design, particularly as we can now see the full legend of the badge: IN MEMORY OF THE / BATTLE OF COPENHAGEN / APRL 2 1801. That the legend supporting Nelson's image is: ADML LORD NELSON OF THE NILE goes a long way toward dating this piece as pre-Trafalgar.

From comparing the two examples, it is pretty clear that the cast examples are made from an identical example of this copper gilt medal, however the casting may have proved too difficult to include the integral surmount found in the original so it was cut away. Or perhaps a damaged original medal which had lost its surmount was used to create the cast. My opinion is that the surmount was cut away to facilitate casting.

I have to say, that in my opinion all of the cast Copenhagen Badges are fakes; fabricated nearly a hundred years after the event they originally celebrated. What follows are my reasons for this opinion.

The casting itself is really rather crude. It is certainly not the sophisticated lost wax process, but looks to be a simple sand cast, which any jeweler could carry out by using a tray of very fine sand into which an impression is made from the host medal, thus forming the mould and then pouring in liquid metal. As the metals that have been cast are gold, silver, copper and tin, this remains a process which could be carried out by many jewelers with adequate equipment to melt the small quantities of metal.

I also wonder about the engraving hand which has a crude and tentative quality, probably to give the impression that the engraving was done on board ship. In my book *Forget Me Not* is explored

coins and plate which has been engraved by sailors, who were in the main quite familiar with working the four sided steel awl, which is easily converted into a 'graver'. The steel awl was used by the boatswain, cobbler, carpenter, blacksmith and all those involved with making sails on board ship.

Here are some samples of sailor engraving from the Nelson era:



To think that the engraver of this cast medal with its wispy yards and sails and crooked lettering was a British man-of-war man who practiced his engraving on board ship, is just without understanding what a British sailor of the Nelson era was really like and capable of. These men didn't approach life in a tentative manner; they grabbed it and lived it! As a note, HMS *Monarch* was at the Battle of Copenhagen.

What we see in the *Tonnant* Copenhagen badge is the effort of a faker in trying to think what a sailor would produce, and he is so far from the mark that he just leaves this author speechless:



Then we have the four ships that are named on these cast Copenhagen Badges. The *Tonnant,* the *Orion*, the *Mars* and *Donegal*. The myth is so strong regarding this badge, that it has been construed that the men who owned them had them engraved with the name of the ship they were then assigned to after the battle and not the ship that they were on board at the Battle of Copenhagen.

In my work on engraved and named Davison Nile and Boulton Trafalgar medals, I've learned that there were a number of ships that, because of the heavy damage received at Trafalgar, were taken into port and had their ship's company discharged into other ships. This made the distribution of the Boulton Trafalgar medal a bit of a challenge for the Admiralty, but there certainly were many men who where no longer on board their Trafalgar ships who received the medal and either engraved them themselves or had a jeweler engrave them. Each and every man whose medal I've studied recorded the name of his Trafalgar ship and not the ship he currently was assigned to. It was his Trafalgar ship and his Trafalgar shipmates that went through that historic day that he is remembering by having his Trafalgar medal engraved, and not some other ship.

Again, I can only think that the creator of the cast Copenhagen Badge was either inept to the extent that he or she didn't check on what ships took part in the battle, or possibly (a long shot this!), the use of names of ships that weren't present at the battle was an intentional error so the forger would be able to claim innocence if caught, e.g. 'You see your Honour, them ships weren't at the battle so how could I be forging a medal to a man whose supposed to have been at the battle!'

And where is the man's name! Following are examples of engraved Davison Nile and Boulton Trafalgar medals. I have encountered medals with just a man's name, but never a medal with just a ship's name on its own.



In an effort to prove these dubious cast badges are actually of an age, one can check the Royal Navy Exhibition at Chelsea in 1891. This was the greatest naval exhibition ever held in Britain and probably anywhere in the world. Naval families from around the country sent their relics from their ancestors who took part in Britain's naval triumphs. Families from both officers and men from the lower deck took part in contributing exhibits with the result being that practically everything that one would expect at such an exhibition was on display.

Checking the catalogue for both medals and relics, one can see a good representation of Davison Nile and Boulton Trafalgar medals that were lent by the families of those who received them. In the relics section, one finds several of the fine gold anchors that were produced after the 1st of June and subsequent battles, including the Nile. I think the original uniface badge was intended to be similar to those anchors and offered commercially as a celebration badge for Nelson's victory at Copenhagen.

But not one example of the cast Copenhagen Badge is found. This certainly doesn't prove they were fakes, but it does show that something purporting to have been of importance to Nelson's Copenhagen veterans wasn't displayed in 1891 along with the medals for the Nile and Trafalgar.

In 1905, the Royal United Service Institute presented an extensive exhibition to commemorate the life of Nelson and the centenary of the Battle of Trafalgar. Again Davison Nile and Boulton Trafalgar medals along with other commemorative objects pertaining to his battles were on display and again there was no example of the cast Copenhagen Badge present.

In 1891, Spink published Colonel Murray's extensive collection of naval medals. No example of the Copenhagen Badge was included. In 1896 the badge was first published in *The Rifle Brigade Chronicle* which created a heated debate, (see The Military Copenhagen Badge which follows.) With no know example prior to 1896, then it really does beg the question as to when these cast badges were made?

That there were no examples of the Captain Hardy *Reward of Merit* and the Captain Broke *Reward of Merit* exhibited at either the Chelsea 1891 or RUSI 1905 exhibitions was certainly a strong clue that something was amiss with these medals, which are now firmly established as fakes made before and after World War I for naval medal collectors. And they were quite compelling fakes, good enough for Milford Haven to include the Stack medal in his catalogue and for Earl Sandwich to acquire two Hardy medals for the National Maritime Museum. He also acquired several of these cast Copenhagen Badges, which is lamentable, however we are dealing with the very earliest stages of medal fakery that would increase substantially over the years.

Lastly, if the myth surrounding these pieces, which has them presented to captains who fought at Copenhagen, was true then certainly Nelson would have had an example in gold. No such medal was amongst the known medals owned by Nelson.

It is, therefore, my opinion that the great enthusiasm for the Royal Navy and particularly for things associated with Lord Nelson following the Chelsea exhibition of 1891 and more particularly the centenary of the Battle of Trafalgar in 1905, that some enterprising jeweler created the cast Copenhagen Badges and sold them to collectors eager to secure another Nelson rarity.

Many thanks to Morton & Eden for permission to reproduce the image and item description for Lot 1388 and understanding there certainly is room for a debate regarding the cast Copenhagen Badge.

The Military Copenhagen Badge

Just when you thought every avenue regarding the Copenhagen Badge had been explored, another use for the badge comes forward.

In 1896 there appeared in *The Rifle Brigade Chronicle* an article which details two medals associated with the Battle of Copenhagen, 1801. Both medals are catalogued by J. L. Balmer in his *Regimental and Volunteer Medals of the Regular Army*, published in 1988.



An early painting of the Battle of Copenhagen

Quoting from *Nelson's Flagship at Copenhagen, HMS Elephant* by Tushingham and Mansfield, pub The Nelson Society in 2001, we find a good description of the Rifle Brigade at Copenhagen.

'Raised in 1800 the Rifle Corps won its first battle honour at Copenhagen serving in the Baltic expedition led by Admiral Sir Hyde Parker in April 1801. The Hon. Col. William Stewart, co-founder and commander of the Rifle Corps, had been chosen to lead the military element of what was essentially a naval expedition. His force comprised of 750 men of the 49th Regiment and a detachment of the Rifle Corps. These riflemen, numbering 115 in total, were under the command of Captain Thomas Sidney Beckwith.

'They were armed with the new Baker Rifle, invented by Ezekiel Baker, gun-maker to His Majesty George III, etc. etc.

'The Corps embarked at Portsmouth on the 28th of February 1801 on board the *St. George*, bearing the flag of Lord Nelson who was second in command of the fleet. On arriving at Yarmouth from where the expedition would depart, half a company of riflemen was transferred to the *London*, flagship of the Commander-in-Chief, Admiral Sir Hyde Parker.

'On the 12th of March, the fleet left Yarmouth Roads reaching the northern point of Denmark on the 19th, and later, dropping down the sound anchored 5 miles above Copenhagen on the 26th. That same evening Lord Nelson removed his flag from the *St. George* to a lighter ship, the *Elephant* 74, accompanied by Col. Stewart, Captain Beckwith, and his officers. The remaining riflemen under the command of the Adjutant, Lieutenant Grant, were transferred from Admiral Sir Hyde Parker's flagship to the *Isis*, 50. The detachment of the 49th Regiment was then distributed amongst the other ships of the line. With Nelson's plan to attack from the south adopted, on April 1st he took up his position and moored two miles to the south of the nearest Danish ship.

'It was arranged that the flat bottomed boats, manned and armed would remain on the sheltered side of each battle ship as they formed their line of battle. These boats would carry the troops in their assault on the Crown batteries in the event of the Danish ships surrendering or being captured. Meanwhile, fully armed soldiers would keep up a barrage of musket and rifle fire from the upperworks of the ships.

'Col. Stewart's well known account of the battle [the *Cumloden Papers*], indicates the ferocity of the struggle, for nearly three hours the pounding continued, and the Rifle Corps contributing both with their Baker rifles and by manning the guns alongside the gun crews of the *Elephant* and the *Isis*. Etc. etc.

'At the close of the battle Lord Nelson in his famous dispatch stated: 'The honourable Colonel Stewart did me the favour to be on board the *Elephant* and himself, with every officer and soldier under his orders, shared with pleasure the toils and the dangers of the day.'

'On the 25th of April, Admiral Sir Hyde Parker was superseded, and Lord Nelson given command of the fleet. He immediately weighed anchor and sailed for Revel to engage the Russians. The Rifle Corps accompanied him throughout his Baltic cruise, during which peace was concluded with Russia and the Northern Confederacy finally broken up. At the end of June, Nelson returned to England and there Colonel Stewart and the Rifle Corps rejoined the rest of the Regiment at Weymouth.'

Tushington and Mansfield also note with particular regard to Colonel William Stewart, 'The standing orders show how much Stewart was in advance of most soldiers of his time. Medals for good conduct and for valour, lectures, school, library, classification in shooting, and athletic exercises were among the means adopted to heighten the efficiency of the corps.'

When one considers the cause for the attack on Copenhagen, one may sense this was not a battle willingly fought. The issue was that through pressure by Napoleon, the Baltic States and Russia agreed to curtail British trade in the Baltic. The trade was essential to the British because it was Stockholm tar which kept the fleet afloat and straight fir trees which provided masts and spars for His Majesty's ships. The Royal Navy could not function without free access to naval supplies from the Baltic.

In Nelson's letter to the Danish Crown Prince, which brought an end to hostilities, Nelson

wrote: 'To The Brothers of Englishmen - The Danes' and Nelson truly meant it.

The battle had to be fought, but the underlying friendship between the English and the Danes brought it to a conclusion before the slaughter was too great. With this sentiment in mind, George III and his ministers decided not to issue gold medals to the admirals and captains of Nelson's fleet, which created great pain for Nelson. Although Alexander Davison wrote of presenting a medal, this author thinks that it never took place because Davison sensed the political wind and certainly was not going to create trouble with his main customer, The Admiralty.

Coming back to the 1896 article from *The Rifle Brigade Chronicle*, which contains a description of a medal attributed to Sergeant John Robinson, who appears to have been at Copenhagen, but not on board *Elephant*. The medal is engraved or struck onto a silver dollar and Balmer attributes it to having been made regimentally, e.g. probably to the order of Colonel Stewart, The medal has on the obverse: RIFLE BATTALION in a circular belt with a crown and hanging bugle-horn in the centre. The reverse has a stand of arms with a shield in the centre which bears a fouled anchor. Around the shield is VICTORY OFF COPENHAGEN.

The other medal described is an example of the Copenhagen Badge which is identical to the naval version, albeit with a blank reverse. This is the earliest publication of the badge. Within the detail provided by Balmer, one can see evidence of what was probably a fairly bitter argument between various parties in the 1890s wherein George Tancred, who catalogued Colonel Murray's collection for Spink which was published in 1891, declared that there was no such medal presented by Nelson at Copenhagen. He later agreed that having seen the medal, that 'it is evidently old', however 'no connection with the regiment [49th Foot], can be proved.'

We then see from Balmer, possibly the most important notation found during this quest to learn the truth of these medals. 'According to Willoughby-Verner, both Hasting Irwin and [Robert] Day had one of these medals, and Day had a silver replica.'

Robert Day (1836 – 1914) lived in Cork, Eire and was a leading light of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society which he was president of for the last twenty years of his life. Robert Day was also a great medal collector and undoubtedly the greatest forger of medals ever! His forgeries specialised in regimental medals, Gorgets and with Franz Tierze in producing fake 17th and 18th century engraved / etched historic glassware.

That we have from Willoughby – Verner who wrote *History and Campaigns of The Rifle Brigade*, two volumes, published 1912 & 1919, that Robert Day had two Copenhagen Badges with one being a *silver replica*, is about as close to a smoking gun that one can get in discovering the truth of these fakes.

On reflection, if the Rifle Brigade was the original target for these fakes, then the removal of the surmount would certainly make sense, e.g. if Nelson had these badges made for distribution amongst the 49th Foot or Rifle Corps, then the surmount would have contained something like: 'To the Rifle Corps at Copenhagen … April 2 1801.'

There is no doubt that these early years in medal collecting were fraught with hazards for the collector mainly because there wasn't a great deal published. New discoveries were commonplace around the turn of the century and as the collecting community were in the main honourable men, there was room for the unscrupulous to use the revived interest in Lord Nelson and take advantage of the unwary.

Perhaps the irony of this whole exercise is that Lord Nelson actually did present medals on several occasions while in the Baltic during 1801. He took with him a supply of Davison Nile medals and we know that one was presented to the Danish Naval Academy at Copenhagen; with it being illustrated in Dudley Pope's *The Great Gamble.*

There are three other examples known:



1) Copper gilt presented to Colonel Stewart. A particularly interesting medal as the unusual loop suspension for the medal is identical to the loop suspension for the gilt Davison Nile which the Nelson effigy at Westminster Abbey is wearing. Everything for this effigy of Lord Nelson came from Lady

Hamilton. (Christie's London, Orders and Medals sale 18 April 1979, Lot 171, family medals of the 7th Earl of Galloway which included the medals of General Sir William Stewart.)

2) Copper gilt, without suspension loop, presented to Admiral Sir Thomas Graves by Nelson on Sunday, 26 April at a party on board the *St. George* in Kioge Bay to celebrate the birthday of 'Santa Emma', his guardian angel. (Sotheby's, London, 5 October 2005, Lot 68.)



3) Copper bronzed presented to Captain Robert Stuart Lambert of HMS *Saturn*. (Purchased from Peter Dale, 23 May 1984. Peter had purchased the Lambert family naval relics which included the Lloyd's Patriotic Fund £100 sword awarded to Captain Henry Lambert when commanding HMS *San Fiorenzo* at the capture of the French frigate *La Psyche*, 14 February 1805. He was later to die when in command of HMS *Java* in her fight with USS *Constitution* on 30 December 1812.)

So, it is quite possible that Nelson did make a personal distribution of medals to particular men before the mast whether in the Royal Navy or as part of the Rifle Corps. But the medal presented may not have been what collectors had expected, the Davison Nile medal which Nelson regularly used to show his approbation to a deserving man.

Sim Comfort is an avid collector of British naval medals and military decorations. He has published widely on these subjects, including two prior articles touching on the authentication of engraved awards. His courageous exposure of fakes has won him many brickbats from those affected, although, given his deep expertise on the subject, it would take bravery to contend with him."

The Christian Gobrecht Archimedes Medal

by

Leonard Augsburger



As a collector of all things Gobrecht, I am always on the lookout for medals, engravings, and biographical material related to this American mechanic, who was active as a medalist prior to his appointment as Chief Engraver of the United States Mint in 1840. Gobrecht's medallic *chef d'oeuvre* is without doubt the award medal for the New England Society for Promotion of Manufactures and Mechanic Arts (Julian AM-55), first issued in February, 1828. Gobrecht's Archimedes design follows the template of Dupre's *Libertas Americana* – a solitary classical bust graces the obverse while the reverse incorporates multiple figures more symbolic of the issue at hand. Dupre's reverse is at first glance more dynamic, the characters locked in a three-way struggle for American independence. Yet the Archimedes reverse, despite the distinct roundels, is not without its own interplay.

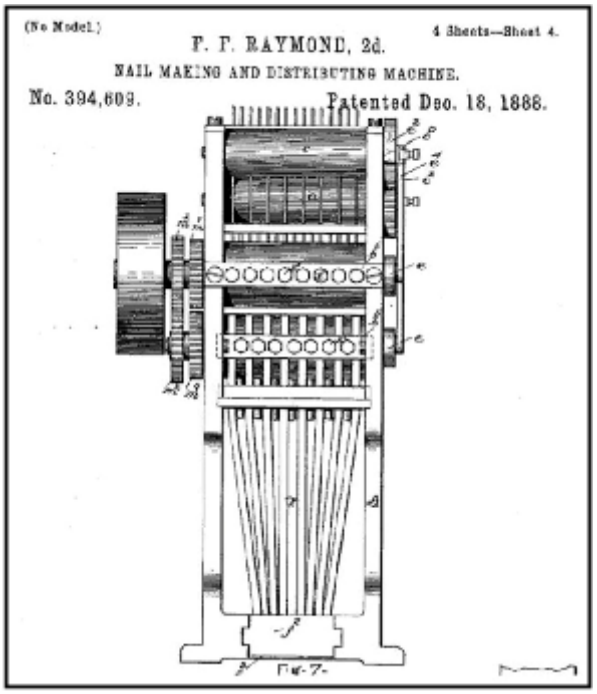


The identification of the three devices on the reverse has stumped cataloguers. The first two are obviously the cotton gin and steamboat, but the third has been various described as a "lathe," (Ford cataloguer), an "unidentified mechanical object" (Julian), or "a machine?", the last guess coming from Gobrecht's grandson, Charles Gobrecht Darrach (1846-1927).



The mysterious mechanical object in the third roundel on the reverse of the Archimedes medal

Once again, Google Books comes to the rescue. Henry's Simpson's "The Lives of Eminent Philadelphians" (1859) includes a character sketch of Gobrecht which identifies the mystery device as a nail-making machine. An image from the online patent archive confirms the identification:


(No Model.) 4 Sheets—Sheet 4.

F. F. RAYMOND, 2d.

NAIL MAKING AND DISTRIBUTING MACHINE.

No. 394,609. Patented Dec. 18, 1888.

Fig. 7.

The group of devices now takes form as a whole – the cotton gin and steamboat were distinctly American innovations. Nail making is less obvious but was as important in its day. The blood of construction, Americans were in desperate need of a national capacity for nail manufacturing in the post-Revolution building boom. Congress took the unorthodox step of imposing levies on already expensive imported nails (so much for modern sensibilities of global trade) with the idea of spurring American innovation. The plan worked, and within a generation America was globally competitive in nail-making. Gobrecht's reverse now contrasts the heroes and the drones: the cotton gin and steamboat are today synonymous with their inventors, while nail making was the domain of the mechanic, tinkerers (among them Jacob Perkins) who contributed incremental improvements in the process. One suspects that Gobrecht may have most personally identified with the latter group – besides engraving, he tried his hand as a mechanic, constructing melodians, and a medal-ruling machine. Still, the abiding theme is American ingenuity – clearly an appropriate signpost for the New England Society for Promotion of Manufactures and Mechanic Arts.

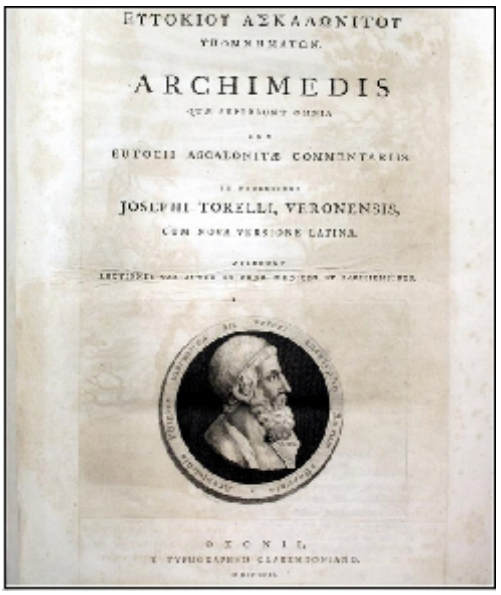
Charles Gobrecht Darrach, the grandson, catalogued his grandfather's works, c. 1900, and recorded the following information on the first Archimedes medal:

The first medal struck was in silver, awarded to C. Gobrecht, 1828 – Feb 4 – "that the silver medal of the Society be awarded to Mr. C. Gobrecht of Phila[delphia], for the genius taste and skill which he has evinced in executing the dies therefore."

Darrach notes a silver example (probably the one mentioned above) in the collection of H. V. Gobrecht. Darrach's quote seems too lengthy to have appeared on the medal itself (perhaps a uniface striking was used?), so apparently he quotes from some other source. Darrach also noted a bronze example in the inventory of S. Hudson Chapman. Gobrecht's personal specimen is untraced today. While certain of his papers were donated to the National Numismatic Collection, c. 1955, this piece was apparently not part of the group.

My own acquisition of this medal is somewhat humorous. On July 27th, 2009, my wife left me a note regarding a voice mail received from "Tony Turnover" regarding a "Gold Brick Archimedes." After not much thought, I concluded that the message was from Tony Terranova. As for the "gold brick Archimedes," I thought this was probably a specimen of Gobrecht's Archimedes

medal, perhaps in gold. I called Tony immediately, who had a good laugh and reminded me that there was no such thing as a gold Archimedes medal. However, he happened to have a silver one for sale, which turned out to be ex. Ford IX (5/2005:29), and I was grateful that he remembered I was interested in Such things.



This engraving of Archimedes from a 1792 title page may have been the model for Gobrecht's obverse bust

Thanks to John Baumgart for the photography of the medal.

Bibliography

Charles Gobrecht Darrach catalog (Historical Society of Pennsylvania MSS),

Elvira Clain-Stefanelli, *From the Drawingboard of a Coin Engraver*, ANA Centennial Anthology, 1991.

Gregory LeFever, *Forged and Cut Iron Nails*, Early American Life, June, 2008.

We are delighted to welcome to these pages **Len Augsberger**, a most accomplished author. His writing first came to our attention when he was compiling for *The Asylum* a listing of the 100 greatest works in U.S. numismatic literature. Just before, he had published *Treasure in the Cellar*, a well-researched account of a gold hoard discovered in Baltimore in 1934. Most recently, he co-authored, along with Joel Orosz, *The Secret History of the United States Mint*, which was voted "Best Book of the Year 2011" by the Numismatic Literary Guild.

Letters to the Editor

From: Christopher Eimer
To: Adams, John
Subject: MCA Advisory

Hi John,

It is early Sunday morning and I have been reading the latest MCA Advisory, which has some great things in it, most notably the piece on Christopher Artischofski Arciszewski, for which many congratulations to you and Dim Verschoor. Incidentally, you illustrate the medal bought from DNW, but it looks so much better now. It is amazing what some background research does to one's perception of a medal, in what is an extraordinary story!

Best wishes,

Chris

• • • •

Dear John,

I enclose for you a copy of the Rochester Numismatic Association 100th Anniversary medal. The dies were made by ex-U.S. Mint designer Thom Rogers. Rogers created the design for twenty two U.S. coins and five medals for Congress.

This medal shows a modern version of the Roman god Mercury - which is an unofficial symbol for the city of Rochester. The 2 1/2 inch medals were struck at North American Mint in Rochester.

If any MCA members would like to order a copy, they are $28 plus $3 postage. Only 200 copies were made. Send orders to the Rochester Numismatic Assoc. c/o Gerry Muhl, 50 Rogers Parkway, Rochester, NY, 14617.

Thanks, Gerry

[In reading old copies of The Numismatist, I especially enjoyed reading the minutes of the Rochester club. From the time it was led by Dr. French - "the jolly abortionist" - to the present day, it has been a most sociable and productive organization. Ed.]





• • • •

From: David Bowers
To: Clifford Mishler ; dick.johnson@snet.net ; Adams, John ; David.Alexander@stacks.com
Sent: Wednesday, October 19, 2011 3:21 PM
Subject: medal

Dear Cliff,

In going through some things I found and scanned this medal.

I wonder if it has been publicized. Also, who is the sculptor, T ERKEN or TERKEN it seems. Before the colors fade perhaps you could say something about this medal (no need to mention me or the reverse), perhaps in the MCA Advisory? It is very nicely done and very large and impressive. Are they still being awarded?

Dave Bowers

• • • •

Cliff, Dave and John:

Medallic Art Co was very proud to have been commissioned by Cliff to make this medal. What a loving tribute to Cliff's first wife.

Cliff, I believe you and Bill Louth had made the arrangements for this medal, I do not believe it went through the sales department. Right?

The artist was John R. Terken (1912-1993). He is most noted for his exceptionally fine portraits. I have taken the liberty to attach his full entry from my databank.

I have checked the Medallic Art die records and found we still have this die on hand although it has been renumbered (from **69-48** to **1969-048** since we are now in a second century of our die records).

I have copied this email to my associate at Medallic Art, Rob Vugteveen. If you would like some addition data or attention, or perhaps a photo of the die itself, kindly address that request to Rob.

Most cordially,

Dick





• • • •

October 27, 2011

Dear Mr. Adams,

I have read with delight your newsletter for the past several years, and it has enhanced my knowledge of medals substantially. I first came to medal collecting quite by accident. As a child I was given an incomplete set of circulated Indian Head Pennies and delighted in finding missing years, and mints to complete the set. When one of my younger brothers took the collection, and spent it on bubble gum from a machine, I was heartbroken, but moved on to other things. As a physician, many years later, one of my patients gave me a complete set of the Great Men of Medicine series, by the American anatomist and sculptor C Abram Belskie. I was later delighted to learn that he had been a member of the faculty of New York Medical College, where I was a professor of surgery myself for many years.

It wasn't until many years after this gift was received that I began to delve into the intentional collection of medals related to medical subjects and have since enjoyed the chase for these objects, as well as the pleasure of learning about the casting, origins, artists, etc that accompany the medals themselves.

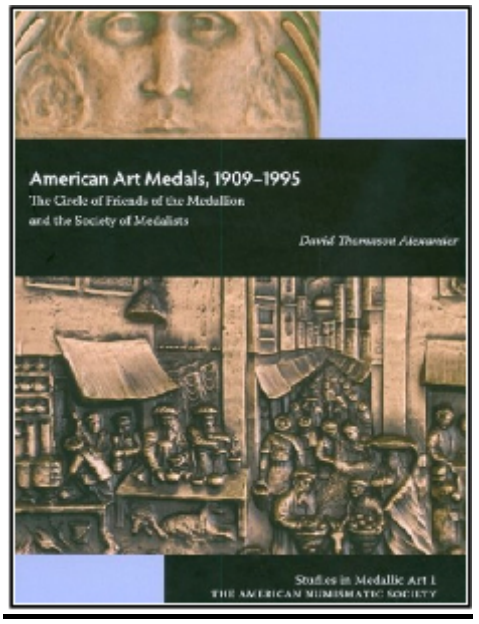
For many years I have served as a peer reviewer for scientific journals and the occasional book reviewer as well. It was with a bit of a shock that I saw your recent newsletter, with the self-review of his new book "American Art Medals: 1909-1995", by David Alexander. Self-criticism was a highlight of the cultural revolution of Mao's China, but is not commonly practiced, publicly, in the area of book reviewing.

None the less, I found the book intriguing and ordered it. It is indeed a definitive history of the COF and SOM, as touted, as well as a lavishly illustrated, beautifully produced book, itself a genuine work of art. The author is to be commended for his effort and I am grateful to have access to this level of detail and information. So as an independent reviewer, I can attest to the book's value, as an addition to the library of anyone interested in metallic sculpture whether or not they collect these particular series.

Sincerely Yours,

Jane A. Petro, MD FACS
Jamaica Plain MA

[Agreed that self-review is not optimal. However, because the book is an important one, we pressured David for a review and he turned out to be the only volunteer. Next time, you will head my list - we are quite short of members who know medicine, who know Mao and who can write.ED.]



Admiral Vernon Medals

REQUIEM for a VERNON VARIETY

Fiddling on EBay, we came across an offering of a rarity in the Admiral Vernon series, PBv 24-S. It was all we could do to refrain from hitting the "Buy Now" button, but somehow we managed restraint. Analysis of the EBay image confirmed that the piece was a PBv 24-S but, oops, the piece also appeared to be a PBv 22-S. Did the authors of *Medallic Portraits of Admiral Vernon make a mistake?* Were the varieties the same or different?

We retrieved the original photos used in the book and submitted the two obverses to Sherlock Lopez. Here is what he had to say: "Same die. Initially, I had the lettering a little off, but then I got them to line up, and ran the chords through the medals from identical spots – and they crossed the medals identically."

Alas, the series now loses a variety: PBv 22-S stands as is and PBv 24-S departs. Sadder still, we lose the only variety contributed by Malcolm Storer, the gentleman who, in his 1919 opus, identified more than 50 varieties not seen by anyone else before or since.



Chords (remember your High School Geometry?) which are placed through two identical points in both PBv 24-S (left) and PBv 22-S (right) begin and end at the same location on both medals, and cross through the same lettering and design elements along their path. There is no variance; these medals were struck from the same die.

LOSE ONE, WIN ONE

Just as we are losing a Vernon variety, we are gaining one, as first reported by David Palmer in the Spring issue of *The C4 Newsletter*. This variety, which with its new obverse and new reverse becomes PBv 52-AA, is of a relatively scarce size – 31.9 mm. However, the design elements – portrait, ships, and forts - are by a familiar engraver, indeed one who had access to pinchbeck metal. He was of the "inner circle", as described in the lead article above..



New Vernon Variety PBv 52-AA

As can be seen above, the high points of the medal are flat. The flatness was not caused by wear; witness the abundance of golden glow, as made. Rather, the manufacturing process employed – casting in this case – was not adequate to bring up all the features of the design. The rarity of PBv 52-AA may have been caused by the maker giving up after a few unsatisfactory pieces were cast or, just as likely, the maker may have attempted to use the mold as a die, with a fatal result. Whichever, our thanks to Mr. Palmer for a most instructive medal.

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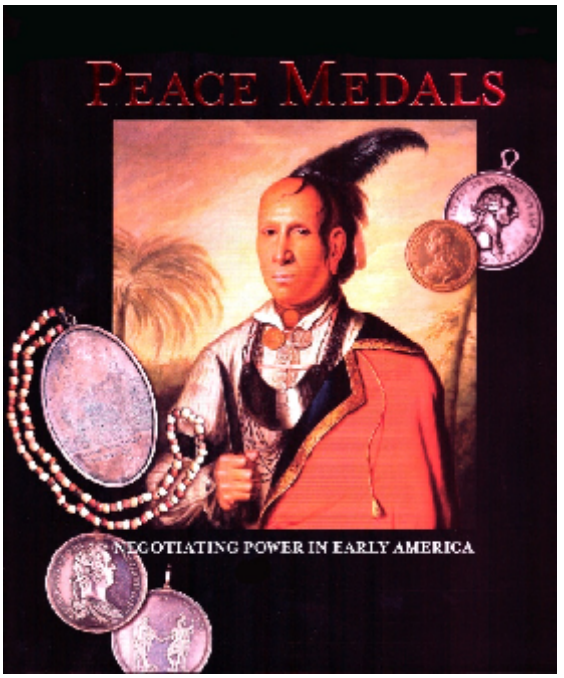
Beautiful examples of the artistry of coins and medals, these peace medals selected from the Gilcrease collection are most notable for their historical significance. They serve as important symbols of the turbulent times that saw the birth of the American nation and its rise to world prominence. Peace medals also represent promises, kept and broken, made by our government to Indian peoples across the continent."

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